

Sunan of Eating

Anas رضي الله عنه narrates in a ḥadīth that
Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم once said to him,

*'...and whosoever loves
my sunnah, loves me, and
whoever loves me will be
with me in Jannah.'*

(At-Tirmidhī)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

- 1) To spread the dining mat. (*Al-Bukhārī, Ibn Mājah*)
- 2) To remove one's shoes. (*Ibn Mājah*)
- 3) To wash both hands.¹ (*Ibn Mājah*)
- 4) To eat with the intention of gaining strength for 'ibādah (worship). (*At-Targhīb wat-Tarhīb*)
- 5) To sit on the floor in the tashahhud position, or the tashahhud position whilst keeping one leg upright, or in a squatting position. (*Mirqāh-al-Mafātīh*)
- 6) It is disliked to sit crossed legged. (*Zād-al-Ma'ād*)
- 7) Not to lean and eat. (*Al-Bukhārī*)
- 8) Not to sit on a cushion. (*Al-Bukhārī*)

¹ Muftī 'Abdur Raḥīm Lājpurī ﷺ has written in his 'Fatāwā Raḥīmiyya' that the sunnah when washing hands before eating is to wash the hands fully, up to the wrists. We tend to just wash our fingers or fingertips, which is contrary to the sunnah method.

9) To eat together and share the utensils.
(*Ibn Mājah, Aṭ-Ṭabrānī*)

10) To initiate the food with the eldest or most pious person in the gathering. (*Muslim*)

11) To begin from the right and then continue to the right when giving out food or drink.
(*Al-Bukhārī, Muslim*)

12) To recite the following whilst the food is being served:
اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِيهِ وَأَطْعِمْنَا خَيْرًا مِنْهُ
(*At-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah*)

13) To recite the following for the one who is serving the food:
اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَهُمْ فِي مَا رَزَقْتَهُمْ
وَاعْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَارْحَمَهُمْ
(*Muslim, Abū Dāwūd*)

14) To eat and drink with the right hand.
(*Al-Bukhārī, Muslim*)

N.B. When drinking, one must pay attention as to which hand is being used for holding the cup or utensil. Many a time, the utensil is only resting on the right hand, but is in full control of the left. In such cases, it will be considered as drinking with the left hand.

15) To eat with three fingers (*Muslim, Aḥmad*), but if the need arises, then to use five fingers is also permissible. (*Faḥ-al-Bārī*)

16) To refrain from eating with only one or two fingers. (*Jam'-al-Wasā'il*)

17) To refrain from eating or drinking very hot food or drink. (*Kanz-al-'Ummāl*)

18) Not to blow on the food or drink. (*Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah*)

19) To recite: بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ وَبَرَكَاتِهِ before one begins. (*Aṭ-Ṭabrānī, Al-Bayhaqī*)

If one forgets, he should recite: بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ أَوْ لَهُ وَآخِرُهُ upon remembering. (*At-Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd*)

20) If the food is of one type then one should eat from his side of the plate. (*Al-Bukhārī, Muslim*)

21) To recite: الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ after every morsel and after every sip. (*Muslim*)

22) If a morsel falls on the floor, one should pick it up, clean it and eat it. (*Muslim, Ibn Mājah*)

23) Not to criticise the food. (*Al-Bukhārī*)

24) Not to praise the food in a greedy manner.

(*Şirāṭ-ash-Shāmī*)

25) Not to sniff or smell the food. (*Kanz-al-Ummāl*)

26) To eat in such a way that one third of the stomach is for food, another third for water and the final third left for breathing. (*Zād-al-Ma'ād*)

27) To clean the plate thoroughly ensuring no food goes to waste. (*Muslim, At-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah*)

28) To lick the fingers after eating, beginning with the middle finger, then the index finger and finally the thumb. (*Muslim, At-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah*)

29) After eating recite the following ad'iyah (plural of du'ā):

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَنَا وَسَقَانَا وَجَعَلَنَا مُسْلِمِينَ
(*Abū Dāwūd, At-Tirmidhī*)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَنِي هَذَا وَرَزَقَنِيهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ
حَوْلٍ مِنِّي وَلَا قُوَّةٍ
(*Abū Dāwūd, At-Tirmidhī*)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَ وَسَقَى وَسَوَّغَهُ وَجَعَلَ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا
(Abū Dāwūd)

30) Also to recite the following ad'iyah if there is a da'wah (invitation):

أَفْطَرَ عِنْدَكُمْ الصَّائِمُونَ، وَأَكَلَ طَعَامَكُمْ الْأَبْرَارُ،
(Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd) وَصَلَّتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ

اللَّهُمَّ أَطْعِمْ مَنْ أَطْعَمَنِي وَاسْقِ مَنْ سَقَانِي (Muslim)

31) To recite the following du'ā whilst the dining cloth is being lifted, or if one has to get up before it is lifted:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ غَيْرَ مَكْفِيٍّ
(Al-Bukhārī) وَلَا مُودَعٍ وَلَا مُسْتَعْنَى عَنْهُ رَبَّنَا

32) To recite this du'ā whilst washing one's hands:

اللَّهُمَّ أَشْبَعْتَ وَأَرْوَيْتَ فَهَيِّئْنَا وَرَزَقْتَنَا
(Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah) فَأَكْثَرْتَ وَأَطْيَبْتَ فَرِزْنَا



From the Teachings of Shaykh Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat *ḥafīẓahullāh*:

It is very pleasing to know that many people try to act upon the sunnah of our beloved Prophet ﷺ and bring his teachings into their lives; however, most only act upon those things commonly known as sunnah and miss many out. The sunan of eating are just a few of many examples.

Although the sunan of eating are numerous, only a few are commonly practiced, i.e. spreading the dining cloth, sitting on the floor, reciting the masnūn ad'iyah, and washing the hands before and after eating.

Another important point to remember is that these sunan are not just for lunch and supper; they are to be implemented whenever we eat and whatever we eat, even at tea-time or when we are merely snacking on a packet of crisps or a bar of chocolate.

The norm in society is for tea to be served on a table, whether having it for oneself or serving it to a

guest. We somehow happen to leave aside and ignore the sunnah of our beloved Prophet ﷺ at tea-time. Is not what we have with our tea a type of food too? We should therefore adopt the sunnah of our beloved Prophet ﷺ at tea-time too, which includes reciting the masnūn ad'iyah, spreading the dining mat and washing our hands before and after finishing, instead of just wiping them with a tissue.

The Ṣaḥābah ﷺ would scarcely find enough food to eat regularly. For them, dates and water would just about be enough; sometimes not even that. Regardless, they would leave no stone unturned in acting fully upon the sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. We should therefore imitate them in following the Prophet ﷺ's blessed footsteps. May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the ability to do so. Āmīn.